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# dialogue

The Staff Newsletter of the

Ministry of Community and Social Services

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## Janet Ecker named minister



Janet Ecker

Janet Ecker was appointed Minister of Community and Social Services on Aug. 16, 1996.

In July 1995, Premier Mike Harris appointed her as the Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Community and Social Services. In November, then-Minister David Tsubouchi assigned her the responsibility of leading the review of child care for the province. Mr. Tsubouchi is now the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations.

Janet Ecker's political career began on June 8, 1995, with the election of the Progressive Conservative government. She represents Durham West, a suburban riding just east of Metropolitan Toronto.

Prior to her election, Janet Ecker served as the director of policy for the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario, the licensing and regulatory body for the province's doctors. Before joining the college in 1991, she was a public affairs consultant specializing in health and environment issues.

The new minister also has extensive government experience as a communications and media relations advisor. She served as assistant press secretary to former Premier Bill Davis; communications director for the Ministry of Treasury and Economic Affairs; communications advisor to two Ontario environment ministers; and media-liaison officer for the Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations.

Since moving to Ajax-Pickering with her husband in 1986, she has been active in the community with the Durham Regional District Health Council, the Board of the Durham Regional Housing Authority, the Ajax-Pickering United Way and the Durham YWCA. Ms. Ecker was also an on-air volunteer for the local community cable station, hosting various public affairs programs.

Raised in Exeter, a small town north of London, she attended the University of Western Ontario, where she received an honours Bachelor of Arts degree in journalism. She is married to Derek Nelson, a veteran journalist.

## Ontario Works gets under way

by Julia Naczynski

Since the 20 first sites for Ontario Works were announced on June 12 by then-Minister David Tsubouchi, area office and local staff have been forging ahead with our municipal partners to develop the program and prepare for implementation this fall.

A staff member has been selected in each area office as the ministry's key contact person for Ontario Works. In the areas of the province where Ontario Works sites were selected, those staff are now working with

representatives from the municipality or county to develop the business plans that will be submitted to the ministry for approval. (To see who's working on Ontario Works, see the box, **Who's who in Ontario Works**).

Ministry staff who are developing Ontario Works are mostly program supervisors; others have worked in income maintenance or vocational rehabilitation services, and are familiar with employment programs. The municipal staff who are working with

them locally are employed in social service departments or municipal employment programs.

Two joint meetings have been held in Toronto of ministry staff and their municipal partners since the first-site selection was announced, first on June 14 and then on July 18. The 20 first sites will be poised to implement their programs pending approval of their business plans. More sites will be announced in the fall.

There are three components to Ontario Works: community participation, employment support and employment placement. In these early stages, the program applies to employable recipients of General Welfare Assistance (GWA).

Community placement will involve the municipality and local community groups sponsoring worthwhile projects that have been developed locally; the groups can include public, volunteer,

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## Community living expands

As announced by then-Minister David Tsubouchi on July 23, three of our facilities for people with developmental disabilities will close and the remaining three will downsize by the year 2000.

A total of 978 residents — 428 from the closing facilities and 550 from the downsizing facilities — will be living in community settings by Mar. 31, 2000. This announcement builds on the province's long-term commitment to move people with developmental disabilities back into the community.

Here's how the changes are expected to take place:

- Midwestern Regional Centre in Palmerston will close by Mar. 31, 1998. It currently has 76 residents and 216 staff.
- Prince Edward Heights in Picton will close by Mar. 31, 1999. It currently has 218 residents and 414 staff.
- Adult Occupational Centre in Edgar will close by Mar. 31, 1999. It currently has 134 residents and 263 staff.

By Mar. 31, 2000, the remaining facilities will downsize:

- Southwestern Regional Centre in Cedar Springs, which currently has 494 residents and 815 staff, will have 182 residents leave to live in the community.
- Huron Regional Centre near Orillia, which currently has 581 residents and 1,068 staff, will have 184 residents leave for community settings.
- Rideau Regional Centre in Smiths Falls, which currently has 689 residents and 1,024 staff, will also have 184 residents leave for homes in the community.

Because these time-frames are targets, it is too early to determine how this four-year plan will affect staffing and jobs. Staff will play an instrumental role in the development of individual plans for residents as they are prepared for community living settings such as group homes.

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## Caseworker rolling out

by Julia Naczynski



Julia Naczynski photo

Toronto Area Office manager Barb Saunders snipped the ribbon to officially "open" Caseworker Technology at the 770 Birchmount Family Benefits office in Toronto. Helping her was Colin Rowe, implementation project manager for the Toronto offices, and Carol McCann, who led the implementation at Birchmount. Caseworker went "live" at Birchmount on Aug. 12 and is the first of the Toronto offices to use it.

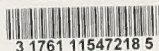
The implementation of Caseworker 1, the computerized system that is transforming the way income maintenance staff do their work, has been proceeding well.

The Automating Social Assistance Project, or ASAPproject, has gotten a number of sites up and running with

Caseworker since our Brantford Family Benefits office went "live" with the first release of Caseworker in March of 1995.

So far, among the provincial (Family Benefits) offices, Caseworker has now been implemented in St. Catharines, St. Thomas, Simcoe, Woodstock, Whitby,

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# The PCard is coming

by Anna DiNardo, Financial and Administrative Services Branch (FASB)



Marie Hicks shows her PCard.

In the December/January 1996 issue of *Dialogue* there was a report on the new Internal Administration Initiative. As you may recall, the major goal of this initiative is to reduce the cost of internal government administration by 33 per cent by the end of 1997/98 while doing business more efficiently. This is to be done through reduced duplication and streamlining of administrative services such as purchasing, financial services, auditing and human resources, among other administrative tasks.

A result of the Internal Administration Initiative is the implementation of a new purchasing card, called the PCard. This PCard is an OPS-wide initiative which will significantly streamline existing procurement and Accounts Payable functions. It is a new mechanism for purchasing and paying for low dollar value goods and services. Ministries will be able to replace multiple vendor payments to one payment per month, issued centrally to the card company.

## Benefits

include:

- streamlined purchasing and payment process;

through reductions in purchase requisitions, purchase orders, paper and accounts payable transactions and paper;

- a simplified purchasing process for employees;
- improved customer service, since vendors are paid by the card company within 48 hours;
- a GST exemption on low dollar-value purchases.

This initiative represents a better and new way of doing business. It is a major change in the way purchases are made and accounts paid. It will require a change in mind-set for both management and staff and a change in existing business practices for the organization. The card empowers cardholders with a tool to expedite low dollar-value purchases. A fundamental principle of the card program is to stress that along with empowerment comes responsibility and accountability.

MCSS has taken a leadership role in the implementation of this initiative. Pilot site implementation began July 1st at Huronia Regional Centre, Rideau Regional Centre, Ottawa Area Office and FASB. Additional sites were scheduled to be implemented shortly.



Photos by Greg Jellard/Redline Photography, Ottawa

Finance manager Daniel Levac and co-ordinator Jean Burnell (seated) with some of the Ottawa Area Office staff who are helping pilot the Purchasing Card: standing, from left, Marilyn Goldberg, Brian Beamish, Diane Masson, Marie Hicks, Theresa Bazinet and Nada El-Hage.

# Community living expands

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"The staff in our facilities are professionals but more than that, they are caring people," said **Brian Low**, director of Developmental Services Branch. "Over the years they have done their utmost to help facility residents achieve their potential, and their contribution to the quality of life of the residents is immeasurable."

Redeployment elsewhere in the ministry and the Ontario Public Service, and factors such as attrition, will also have a role in the futures of staff in these facilities. Jobs will also be created by community agencies to support former residents in their new community settings.

There will still be an estimated 1,200 residents living in facilities when this

four-year plan is completed.

The minister said in his announcement that funding will be re-directed from institutions to local community agencies to help support people with developmental disabilities living in the community. By the year 2000, it's estimated that more than \$60 million in funding will be re-directed into community services.

In 1974, when responsibility for services to people with developmental disabilities was transferred from the Ministry of Health to MCSS, about 4,600 people were being served in community settings such as group homes. Today, there are more than 50,000 people with developmental disabilities living in the community.

# Ontario Works

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service and non-profit organizations. Employment support is practical assistance that helps participants in their efforts to become job-ready, such as structured job-search assistance (such as job-finding clubs and workshops), basic education and job-

specific skills training. Employment placement will support job-ready participants in finding and keeping paid work; it will involve employment agencies that will be contracted to place participants into jobs. It can also include self-employment.

## Who's who in Ontario Works

These are the ministry staff who are developing the first sites for Ontario Works, the area office they're from and the first site or sites they are responsible for:

- John Haist, Jeanette Johnson and Nancy Anderson** in the Mississauga Area Office — Regional Municipality of Peel and of Halton and the County of Dufferin.
- David Earle** in the Windsor Area Office — Kent County.
- Ed Dubas and Barb Swartzentruber** in the Waterloo Area Office — Regional Municipality of Waterloo.
- Louise Lamarche** in the North Bay District Office — City of Timmins, City of North Bay, the District of Muskoka and the Nipissing District Social Services Board.

- Sharon Lessard**, Kingston Area Office — City of Brockville.
- Janet McKiggan** in the North ern Area Office — Algoma District Social Services Board.
- Iona Quinn and John Wilson** of the Ottawa Area Office — City of Cornwall and United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry.
- Kathy Rennick and Jerry Wilczynski** of the Hamilton Area Office — Regional Municipality of Hamilton-Wentworth and of Niagara, and Brant County.
- Elizabeth Roy and Jane Smullen** of the Peterborough Area Office — Regional Municipality of Durham, Northumberland County.
- John Wiebe** of the London Area Office — Oxford County and Huron County.

## Adieu to ORC



Locking the doors of ORC's administration building for the last time: from left, Fred Loach, administrator; Sue Ross, resident care director; Janice Morrow, human resources manager; and Jim Gordon, manager of finance and administration. Not seen is Doreen Bruce, manager of support services.

On June 28, Oxford Regional Centre officially closed. The closure of ORC marks the end of 90 years of service to Ontarians, which over the years included providing treatment and support to people with epilepsy, mental health needs, tuberculosis and developmental disabilities.

The final residents left the centre at the end of March. The remaining time was dedicated to transferring the remaining functions, assets and records, and preparing the site for

transfer to the Ontario Realty Corporation.

The successful move of residents from Oxford Regional Centre to community services, and the resulting closure of the facility could not have taken place without the collaboration and support of numerous individuals and organizations. Residents and their family members were full participants in the transition from the facility to community services, despite some fears and reservations about maintaining service

quality and continuity in the community.

As the final administrator of the Oxford Regional Centre, I would like to thank the individuals and organizations that participated in the planning, the moves of residents to community services, and the final closure. It is a positive and dignified end to a 90-year era of service to the people of Ontario.

Fred Loach, Administrator, Oxford Regional Centre

## Directives on demand by fax

Management Board Secretariat has introduced Fax-On-Demand, an automated system to provide government employees with the current version of any Management Board Directive.

MBS has advised that this will now be their **only** method for providing Directives to ministries. Also, you should know that because this change makes our ministry's MBS database redundant, it is being deleted from our electronic manuals system on DEC (SEARCHmate).

However, as part of its financial policy role, the Financial and

Administrative Services Branch will continue to interpret MBS Directives and their impact on ministry operations and business processes. The branch will continue to update our policies and procedures as needed, and they will continue to be inserted in the Electronic Ministry Manual of Administration.

Fax-On-Demand can also provide you with OPSEU and AMAPCEO documents and interpretive bulletins.

If you have any problems or questions about Fax-On-Demand, contact Ramesh Sharma at the MBS Corporate Policy Branch (416-325-1287).

### To order Directives:

1. Decide which fax will receive the document; have that fax number handy and make sure the fax is ready to receive.
  2. On the **telephone**, dial 416-325-7152 (Fax-On-Demand, within Queen's Park you can just dial 5-7152).
  3. To order a current Directives Index, press 1 and follow the instructions; or, if you know the document number of the Directive/s you want, press 2 and follow the instructions. (The Index will list all the Directives available and tell you the four-digit number you need to use to place your order.)
- The document is sent immediately to your fax machine.

## Caseworker continued from page 1



Loris Dumanian of the ASAP project demonstrates the advantages of Caseworker to Hilda Jetter, who will implement the new system in the Waterloo Area Office. A demonstration/model office is set up on the 6th floor at 880 Bay Street, where many staff are receiving training on Caseworker.

Lindsay, Peterborough, Port Hope, Chapeau, Espanola, Little Current and Gore Bay.

Besides nine Family Benefits offices within the Toronto Area Office, other provincial offices on the short list for 1996 implementation are in Aurora, Clinton, Stratford, the North Bay Area Office and the Ottawa Area Office (Rideau, Laurier and Coburg streets).

As reported in the December/January 1996 issue of **Dialogue**, Caseworker Technology is a computer-based system of software and hardware that reduces paperwork and duplication of effort and will help prevent errors and detect fraud. Eventually it will be used in all ministry Family Benefits offices and in all municipal General Welfare offices. It will affect all 170 provincial and municipal social assistance delivery sites and some 7,000 income maintenance workers across Ontario.

Already a second release of the Caseworker application (CWT 1.13) is under development and due to be piloted this fall. This maintenance release eliminates small "bugs" with better ways of processing information and introduces some new functions such as a case management report subsystem, access to the federal

income tax tables and an automatic archiving process.

One question that has arisen since Caseworker began is what will happen to the project in the event that a single-tier delivery system for social assistance is adopted in the province. Right now, there is a two-tier system: the province looks after Family Benefits, while the municipalities look after General Welfare. A single-tier delivery system, now under discussion by the province and its municipalities as part of what's been called the "who does what" exercise, might change that.

Social assistance reforms such as Ontario Works and a guaranteed support plan for seniors and people with disabilities are other factors that may affect Caseworker.

The interim strategy is to continue implementation of Caseworker at sites where dollars spent in retrofitting will be the lowest, says ASAP project director **Janet Faas**. "We want to continue making the benefits of Caseworker available to sites doing business," she says. The interim solution is to limit the investment made in each site that is implemented. For example, software and training will go ahead; upgrading of hard goods, such as ergonomic furniture, will wait until later.

## Take Our Kids To Work™

Mark Wednesday, Nov. 6 on your calendar and plan now to participate in the third annual Take Our Kids to Work Day.

Ministry staff are encouraged to bring a Grade 9 student (your own or a friend's, or be a volunteer for the day) to their workplace. This province-wide event is aimed at providing young people the opportunity to see different

roles and responsibilities in the workplace, and show them in a hands-on way the link between education and the work world.

Next year, Take Our Kids to Work "goes national" on Nov. 5, 1997.

If you need information about Take Our Kids to Work Day, contact **Irv Kirstein** at the Communications and Marketing Branch at 416-325-5196.

### Analyze your audience

**PLAIN  
LANGUAGE  
PLEASE**

When you use plain language, what you write is determined by your purpose for writing; how your write should be determined by your audience's reasons for reading.

Before you start writing, you need to think about your audience and ask yourself these questions:

- Who are my readers?
- How fluently do they read?

- What do they know about the subject?
  - What beliefs and attitudes do they have about the subject?
  - Why will they be reading this document?
  - Where will be they reading it, and under what conditions?
- The answers to these questions should be your guide in how you organize your document and how you structure your sentences.

## Renting vehicles for business

The ministry and Management Board Secretariat have agreements with two different vehicle rental agencies if you need to use a vehicle for government business. Field offices and all other ministry staff can make use of these arrangements.

ECARS/Enterprise Rent-A-Car offers the best rates and if you use an American Express corporate card to fully pay for the rental, you can avoid the cost of a collision damage waiver (usually that's \$10 extra per day). An economy-sized car rents for \$26.99 per day with unlimited kilometers. To

book, call Carlson Wagonlit Travel at 1-800-615-2277 or any of the 72 ECARS locations in Ontario.

Budget Rent-A-Car offers an economy-sized model for \$36 per day with unlimited kilometers. Call 1-800-268-8900 to book.

More details about the OPS car rental program were included in an e-mail from Financial and Administrative Services Branch to financial services staff dated July 26. You may also contact **Rene Andrada** at 416-327-4600 or **Stephen Chan** at 416-326-8109, both at FASB, for more information.



## People and Places

**John Rabeau** left MCSS on Sept. 9 to become the Assistant Deputy Minister, Human Resources Division with Management Board of Cabinet. He began his career with MCSS in 1979 as a program supervisor with Children's Services in Thunder Bay, later becoming the Area Manager. In 1984 he was appointed Regional Director of the North Region. He came back to the ministry to manage the Income Support Reform Project.

**Marcia Nelson** has become the Manager of Program Planning and Development at the Corporate Policy and Intergovernmental Affairs Branch. She was previously a Senior Policy Advisor. Marcia is currently away on maternity leave.

**Connie McCandless** has left her position as Director of the

ministry's Information Systems Branch to join a private sector firm.

**Kathy Macpherson** has left her position in Workplace Safety and Accommodation to return to school in Vancouver. She is taking the Asia-Pacific Management Co-operative Program, which involves one year of school and one year of work in the Asia-Pacific region.

**Indira Singh** has accepted a one-year secondment to a senior management position with the Business Improvement Division at the Ministry of the Attorney General, which began Aug. 1. She will be responsible for managing and co-ordinating business planning projects and corporate change initiatives. In our ministry she was Senior Manager of the Equal Opportunity Unit.



## Internet policy and access

A ministry Internet policy which includes two access options has been drafted by Information Systems Branch and is being reviewed throughout the ministry. Sign-off should occur in the fall and end the current freeze.

The policy states that "Connectivity to the Internet is a managed and secure process that is used only for business purposes."

The policy requires that any user requesting Internet access must prepare a business case for approval. Approval may be given if access is deemed essential for users to carry out their assigned responsibilities.

Regarding Internet access (a browser and e-mail), the Management Board Secretariat GOVONCA service (GOVernment of ONario Canada) for Internet has increased substantially in price and does not provide user-friendly access and use of the Internet. Therefore, the ministry will be phasing out use of the MBS GOVONCA service, probably by the end of this year.

Access to the Internet for extensive users and users at locations with extensive network traffic is expected to be through a dial-up service. Extensive users regularly access the Internet, print documents and often download

documents and/or software. Extensive users may include:

- policy/program/planning analysts researching policy issues, interacting with government sites and downloading large documents;
  - systems officers/systems specialists supporting ministry operations, networks and organizational units and downloading software or developing applications;
  - technology planners investigating/evaluating technology solutions; and
  - Communications and Marketing Branch staff maintaining the ministry's Internet site.
- Access to the Internet for moderate users will probably be through the MBS MPR Dedicated Service. Moderate users intermittently access the Internet and print documents, but are not likely to download documents and/or software. Moderate users may include:
- Adoptions Unit staff accessing government and agency sites;
  - financial analysts/advisors accessing government sites;
  - purchasing officers interacting with vendor sites; and
  - program supervisors interacting with transfer payment agency sites.

For more information, please contact Gary McCombs at 416-730-6569.

## IN MEMORIAM: Frank Rintoul



**Frank Rintoul** passed away suddenly on June 9, 1996 at the age of 45, after 23 years of service at Rideau Regional

Centre in Smiths Falls.

He started as a residential counsellor and most recently was the residential supervisor at the centre's Behaviour Modification Centre, a program he was instrumental in helping to establish.

Throughout his career at Rideau, Frank was passionate about achieving

excellence in whatever endeavours he undertook. He refused to accept second-best for the residents or staff he worked with. As a colleague who worked with Frank over the years stated, "I can well remember the fun we had working together and the commitment we felt to the residents' betterment." He will be missed by the residents he served and his fellow staff members.

On a personal level, Frank had a deep loyalty to his roots in Lanark County. He was an extremely involved, proud and dedicated father and husband. Our sympathy and prayers are with his family, and in particular, his wife Jessie and his children Jason, Julia and Krystal.

## IN MEMORIAM: Margaret Snowden



**We** are saddened to announce the loss of a friend and colleague, **Margaret Snowden**. Marg passed away April 18, 1996

after a courageous battle with cancer.

Marg joined the ministry's Crown Ward Review Unit in 1984 and is best remembered for her unflinching commitment to improving the quality of life for children in care. Her insistence on quality case management practices and sound permanency planning has had a significant impact on the lives of countless children all over the province. In addition to her responsibilities as a Crown ward

reviewer, Marg was often called upon by children's aid societies to assist or consult on issues.

Prior to joining the ministry, Marg worked for 20 years at Metro CAS (Scarborough office).

These are but some examples of the compassion and strength of character she brought to her life, her family and her job. She will be greatly missed by all of us whose lives were so enriched by having known her.

Besides her husband Harry, Marg is survived by her mother Bessy, daughters Lynn and Leslie, sons Michael, Rob, Joel and Jeremy, daughters-in-law Linda and Elizabeth, son-in-law Roy and five grandchildren.

Contributions in Marg's memory can be made to the Brain Tumor Foundation, 111 Waterloo St., London, ON N6B 2M4.

## Library collection still available

The ministry library collection has become part of Ryerson Polytechnic University and is available to members of the public, including ministry staff.

The ministry library and career centre was closed at the end of March and some materials were distributed to other offices and locations of the ministry. The bulk of the materials — in particular, the book collection, which included books on social and human services and social work — were given to Ryerson. The entire collection is located at the university's Library and Learning Resources Centre, 350 Victoria Street, 6th floor in Toronto. For information, call library administration at 416-979-5144.

## dialogue

Ontario Community and Social Services

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## It's the United way

The annual United Way campaign is beginning this month in your workplace. This campaign benefits many worthy charities in your own community, so please don't forget to give, and to participate in fundraising events in your workplace. Payroll deduction is the "painless" way to give — why not try it this year if you haven't done so before?